
**2003-2004 *No Child Left Behind*—Blue Ribbon Schools Program
Cover Sheet**

Name of Principal Dr. Linda Webb

Official School Name Pillow Elementary

School Mailing Address 3025 Crosscreek Drive

<u>Austin</u>	<u>TX</u>	<u>78757-7535</u>
City	State	Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

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I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Pat Forgione

District Name Austin Independent School District Tel. (512) 414-2482

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Doyle Valdez

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2003-2004 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 1998.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district:

74	Elementary schools
16	Middle schools
1	Junior high schools
11	High schools
9	Other (Briefly explain)
111	TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$7,319.00

- Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$7,088.00

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

☒ Urban or large central city
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
☐ Suburban
☐ Small city or town in a rural area
☐ Rural

4. 3 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total		Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
K	42	23	65		7			
1	31	28	59		8			
2	42	36	78		9			
3	25	26	51		10			
4	35	33	68		11			
5	26	22	48		12			
6					PreK	16	19	35
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →								404

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>35.4</u> | % White |
| <u>22.3</u> | % Black or African American |
| <u>34.9</u> | % Hispanic or Latino |
| <u>7.2</u> | % Asian/Pacific Islander |
| <u>.2</u> | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| 100% Total | |

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 35.15 %

(This rate includes the total number of students who transferred to or from different schools between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in the school as of October 1, multiplied by 100.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	57
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	85
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	142
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	404
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.3515
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	35.15

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 19.6 %
79 Total Number Limited English

Proficient

Number of languages represented: 16

Specify languages:

Chinese, Ekpeye, Farsi, German, Hindi, Kannada, Philipino (Tagalog), Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Urdu, Yoruba

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 49.3 %
199 Total Number Students Who Qualify

If this method does not produce a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 12.6 %
51 Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

<u>4</u>	Autism	<u>2</u>	Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u>	Deafness	<u>13</u>	Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u>	Deaf-Blindness	<u>19</u>	Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u>	Hearing Impairment	<u>27</u>	Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u>	Mental Retardation	<u>0</u>	Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>22</u>	Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u>	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
	(Duplicate Total)	<u>8</u>	Emotionally Disturbed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>30</u>	<u> </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>3</u>	<u> </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>7</u>	<u> </u>
Support staff	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>44</u>	<u>1</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio: 12:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. (Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.)

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Daily student attendance	95.8%	96.2%	96.0%	96.5%	97.3%
Daily teacher attendance	96.35%	96.63%	97.55%	96.42%	96.8%
*Teacher turnover rate	5.7 %	11.8%	16.2%	10.8%	8.1%
Student dropout rate					
Student drop-off rate					

PART III - SUMMARY

Although nearly half of our school families qualify for free or reduced lunch benefits, Pillow Elementary is rich. We possess that oft-sought treasure at the end of the rainbow, but our bounty consists not of gold coins. Rather our richness is found in the most precious commodity in the world: human minds, spirits, and capabilities. Each school year we embark upon the mission of providing a safe and supportive environment that results in life-long learning. To accomplish our goal, we steer by two tried and true navigating principles. We believe respect is essential to success and strength is found in diversity. The beauty of our students, families, and teachers is a colorful portrait of socioeconomic levels, ethnic races, cultural backgrounds, languages, and experiences. This mosaic yields a powerful opportunity for academic, intellectual, and emotional growth. To ensure growth, we act upon the strongly held belief that every child can learn.

Pillow's strategy of organizing highly effective teams is a major factor in student achievement and continual teacher development. Teams consist of staff members who work closely across and within grade levels and in vertical alignment to ensure close attention for students as they progress through each subsequent grade. Other school groupings include faculty members with specialized training in bilingual and English as a Second Language who provide services for students. In addition, a highly trained cadre of faculty oversees the program charged with providing unique challenges for "Gifted and Talented" (GT) students. Opportunities such as contributing to Pillow's web site or researching monthly projects foster a stimulating environment for GT students. Special education services range from Content Mastery instruction for identified students who need additional support with classroom assignments, a life skills class, and three self-contained units that serve emotionally disturbed children. Dedicated teachers work to include all students in regular education classrooms for as much of the instructional days as possible, according to the needs and capabilities of the individual child. Teachers also partner within or across grade levels to utilize particular strengths and fields of interests thereby promoting creatively engaging delivery of instruction which is differentiated by needs of students. Going hand and hand with our belief that all can learn is the understanding that when a student is struggling, it is imperative to find answers and administer aid. The Impact Committee, a specialized faculty group, offers support for finding ways to help students overcome obstacles at home or in school and continue on a path towards achievement.

Each morning as students arrive at Pillow, happy, smiling staff members offer greetings at the sidewalk curb and inside the main entrance. During the daily morning assembly, Pillow's principal launches parents, staff, and students on the day's learning adventures. Dr. Linda Webb often uses humor to illustrate and dramatize a point such as the need for safely carrying a backpack down the hall or why the use of courtesy is essential for solving problems. Her playful manner helps promote the understanding that mistakes are opportunities for learning. These skillful presentations build a sense of trust and basic security, essential ingredients for risking new learning. In her role as master of ceremonies, Dr. Webb enthusiastically leads all those assembled in rejoicing for reaching a school wide goal or applauding the personal achievement of a school member. This recognition raises the community's sense of belonging and builds self-esteem. Upon dismissal from assembly, students again encounter greetings and hugs from adults in the hallway. Dutifully stationed outside the library door is one of Pillow's own retired teachers, Martha Burghart. Her voluntary services resulted in our school district recognizing her as Volunteer of the Year. She arrives at Pillow each day at 7 a.m. and begins her schedule of tutoring, conducting library story times, teaching art lessons, or rehearsing kindergartners in circus acts, a 30-year traditional PTA presentation. Pillow is blessed with the treasure of community and parent partners. When students give reasons for Pillow's greatness, they respond with heartfelt answers such as: "My teachers always encourage, understand, help and support me...All of us believe in ourselves and that we can do many things together...Everybody at Pillow respects each other in every way." These comments lend further support to the school's T-shirt motto: "Pillow is the best school a kid could ever have!"

PART IV- INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment results: Pillow's accountability rating as based on state assessments is Recognized, the second highest possible statewide rating. There are 74 elementary schools in the Austin Independent School District (AISD), and Pillow ranks 15th in the percent of students who passed all statewide assessment tests. Of the elementary schools in AISD, Pillow ranks 12th in the percent of students receiving a commendation for obtaining the very highest of possible academic performance on all of their state testing assessments. In reading, 28.8% of Pillow students received a highest commendation. Our school's math test results earned outstanding commendations for 24.8% of Pillow students. Writing assessments produced 20.5% of students achieving commendation recognition with more students earning a high mark (a score of 3 or 4) on their written composition than those who received the lower marks (a score of 1 or 2). We are proud to be the only school in AISD's top quartile of assessment scores whose student population includes a large percentage of racial, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity.

Perhaps the most noteworthy of all achievements is the fact that statewide assessments revealed Pillow has no significant performance disparity among economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students or other subgroups. For example, 100% of all Pillow 3rd graders passed the reading assessment. This includes students in all subgroups of African-American, Hispanic, White as well as economically disadvantaged students. On Pillow's 4th grade writing assessments, 100% of African-American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students passed thus outperforming the 93.8% passing rate of our White students. In math assessments, Pillow also produced some amazing results: 94.3% of 3rd graders passed, 97.6% of 4th graders passed, and 100% of all fifth grade students passed.

These scores reflect the achievement of Pillow students during the first year administration of a new more challenging statewide assessment tool. We attribute our improved student achievement to high academic standards aligned to an enriched curriculum that is delivered to meet each student's needs, strengths, and abilities.

PART IV - 2. Use of assessment data: Pillow finds assessment data to be a powerful tool for discovering ways to improve student learning and our school's performance. When assessment data arrives, individual teachers, as well as teams of colleagues, analyze the information for indications of curriculum strengths and weaknesses. Once these are known, teachers build upon the successes of previous learning and refocus on ways to improve in challenging areas.

During faculty sessions, for example, groups of teachers study test questions missed by students. After examining and discussing a frequently missed item, we may find that student difficulty stems from unfamiliar vocabulary words used in the question. Teachers take this insightful information back into the classroom and monitor their instruction to insure the use of appropriate vocabulary in lessons. Vocabulary building that begins with the youngest Pre-Kindergartner and continues vertically throughout the grades is extremely important because our students come from homes where 16 different languages are spoken. Teachers working in vertical team alignment are mindful of the need to cover essential vocabulary at each grade. Grade level teaching teams discuss meaningful methods for presenting vocabulary in a developmentally appropriate manner for their students.

We also use assessment data to select third grade students for small group instruction with our Reading Specialist. After carefully analyzing data to find the knowledge gaps of each student, she works to build the children's reading comprehension strategies and develop their decoding and fluency skills.

Informed by student assessment results, teachers may join in partnerships or work individually as they tutor students needing extra support. Staff members unselfishly volunteer before, during, or after school hours to provide teaching opportunities for promoting student learning. This school-wide approach

allows subjects to be taught by a different teacher who might use novel materials or different methods. Often, a fresh presentation gives students a new way of understanding challenging concepts and results in learning strides and achievement. These efforts reinforce our belief that all children can learn, and it is up to us to find the best method for fostering each child's growth.

PART IV - 3. Communicating assessment results: Developing and maintaining lines of communication between Pillow and its students, their families, and the larger community is a fundamental priority for the school. Everyone has a stake in raising the achievement of students. In the classroom, students and teachers depend on clearly understanding expectations and achievements. Teachers check for student understanding when giving assignments. Student-developed criteria for completion of a task is posted and known. Through the use of grading rubrics, students know at the outset and are able to determine what they must do in order to achieve a specific grade. Communication in the classroom is based on the principle of using accountable talk. This results in children assuming responsibility for understanding expectations, personal achievements, and feeling empowered to ask questions for clarification. Clarity can lead to comprehension, academic rigor, and progress for student and teacher.

Each teacher has a daily conference period when parents may schedule a meeting to discuss student concerns. In addition, Pillow holds two mandatory parent conferences in the fall and spring semesters. At these meetings, teachers help parents review student assessment data and together make collaborative plans for student growth. One of the most successful methods of conferencing occurs when a student attends and presents his or her own work to the parents. As a result, both the student and parent set goals and make plans on how to achieve them. Faculty members also conduct curriculum nights on math, language arts, or science activities for student enrichment and parental learning. Pillow classrooms are equipped with telephones and computers. Parents may use e-mail or phone messages, as well as the more traditional methods of notes and informal chats before and after school in order to keep in touch with a student's progress. A large billboard and current calendar located outside the school building help keep the community informed. The Pillow web site and monthly PTA meetings offer school updates. Progress reports are sent home every four and a half weeks and report cards every nine weeks. Schoolwide "Thursday Folders" go home with completed assignments, letters from classroom teachers, office correspondence, a Pillow Newsletter, or PTA notices. The daily morning assembly provides an opportunity for announcements by the principal, parents, or community partners. Individual and school successes are shared and celebrated at this time. For special faculty or school achievements, the AISD cable TV channel carries personal interviews and school board recognition of these Pillow milestones.

The larger community is also involved by representation on various committees such as the Campus Advisory Committee, which meets monthly to discuss school issues and events. Monthly morning coffee meetings give opportunities for discussing topics with interested parents and community partners. State assessment scores and state rankings are published in the city newspaper and on the district and school web site. Through our Partners in Education program, businesses encourage employees to become mentors and tutors for Pillow students. Members of the neighborhood also volunteer their energies in an effort to support Pillow students' achievement. A Pillow staff teacher performs the duties of reporter for the local neighborhood newspaper. The school column keeps the community informed of Pillow triumphs and challenges.

PART IV- 4. Sharing successes: Pillow is a magnet for educators seeking to improve education for students. Teachers and administrators from other schools take "learning walks" through our campus to focus on classroom instruction and Pillow's educational environment. Teachers from surrounding districts visit to learn about Pillow's unique vertical team organization and conduct interviews with teaching teams about effective practices. Schools invite Pillow teaching teams to present information about our campus at their faculty meetings. Pillow teachers attend and conduct educational inservice meetings where successful teaching methods, content, and ideas are shared. Pillow teachers participate

on district planning committees and take leadership roles for creating materials and guides used districtwide.

Videotaped lessons of Pillow teachers engaged in exemplary classroom practice will be incorporated on the new University of Texas Knowledge Gateway site. Pillow teachers' ideas for parental support of math and science learning through home activities will be posted on the Gateway also. Pillow's own web site offers an opportunity to disseminate ideas. Teachers receive communication via e-mail from educators seeking answers to questions or hoping to arrange a visit to our school. The Pillow principal often uses videotapes of Pillow activities in meetings and conference presentations. In her role as "Master Principal," Dr. Webb conducts beginning year orientation for newly hired principals, provides guidance and counseling as the year progresses, and serves as a mentor during the administrators' inaugural year. Our very own Pillow Television Productions feature student reporters bringing the latest news of Pillow to audiences at school and in the larger community.

Members of the Pillow teaching faculty serve as mentors to student teachers, novice teachers, and teachers in our district who are seeking National Board Certification. Some Pillow faculty members are award winners who speak at conferences, surrounding universities, and before committees. Published faculty writings allow for dissemination of our ideas and successes to a wide audience of those striving for educational advancements.

PART V-1: CURRICULLUM AND INSTRUCTION

Our curriculum is fundamentally tied to the state TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) and aligned to TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) assessments.

1. Mathematics: Our approach to mathematics encourages students to develop a greater understanding of how processes work and when to apply them. While students are making sense of numbers and mastering basic computation, they are challenged to build upon their knowledge to create and solve exciting, meaningful, authentic problems with real world applications. Working cooperatively in small groups with hands-on projects, students actively see how different concepts relate and discover there is more than one solution to an equation. These reasoning skills enable students to think flexibly about mathematics and adaptively solve complex problems in life as well as in the classroom setting. Teachers at Pillow know that high expectations lead to high achievements.

Social Studies: Pillow's social studies curriculum revolves around engaging students in problem solving and in-depth research. Teachers challenge students to develop hypotheses, make plans for gathering information, closely evaluate data, and creatively report their findings. At the primary level, teachers nurture students' developing speaking skills, their ability to solve classroom problems, and broaden their awareness of the community around them. Intermediate students widen their focus to include the broader sphere of city and state as well as American history. Our families' multiple heritages and viewpoints enrich our studies. Students energetically construct formal oral presentations, actively participate in small and large group discussions, and are called upon to defend their opinions on historical and contemporary social issues.

Science: Pillow students are challenged to become like working scientists as they observe, explore, and attempt to explain the phenomena of the natural world. Our science curriculum is based on a study of earth, life, and physical sciences that integrate the concepts of scientific methods, process skills, and safety in science. Using real life situations, students apply scientific inquiry in cooperative and independent problem solving which develops critical thinking skills and effective communication. They pose questions for study and investigate and form hypotheses. They review scientific information in order to use technological resources to design experiments to test their hypotheses. Our students gather and analyze data resulting from those experiments, then publish and present their findings and conclusions.

Fine Arts: Every Pillow student participates in art and music which are considered essential elements in their education. Our fine arts curriculum enhances and integrates the skills and knowledge of social studies, science, mathematics, and language arts.

The art curriculum encompasses the strands of perception, creative expression, historical and cultural heritage, and critical evaluation. When creating art works, our students rely on their deepening perceptions of the environment, imagination, memories, and life experiences. This challenge to express their ideas in a variety of materials and media develops our students' reflective thinking, disciplined effort, and problem-solving skills.

Students explore music through an activity-based program of singing, listening, participating in dance, and dramatic activities. They also have an opportunity to experiment with playing the recorder, electronic keyboard, ukulele, guitar, and Orff instruments. Once a month, each grade level prepares and performs a musical for the student body then presents the evening program for PTA.

Language Arts: Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are integrated throughout Pillow's curriculum. The Balanced Literacy Model forms the basis for direct language arts lessons. In this approach, teachers model each new skill by thinking aloud about the process. Instructors support a child's learning through shared, interactive, and guided practice before assigning independent work encompassing new literacy skills. Students proudly share their reading and writing competencies with peers and adults through activities such as the Author's Chair, Writer's Tea, Reading Buddies, and Reader's Theater.

V-2. Reading curriculum: Reading is the foundation for the success of our students. For this reason, the Pillow faculty made a decision to base our reading program on the Balanced Literacy Model. This model provides a support system for our youngest kindergarten beginner through our intermediate and advanced readers. Primary students concentrate on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary building, word study, decoding, and comprehension. Our more advanced readers focus on developing vocabulary, word analysis, and comprehension strategies. Our teachers continually read to and with students on a daily basis. We believe this contributes to construction of a strong literacy foundation in every grade. Other elements of our program include these components:

- Shared reading lets our student use reading strategies in a non-threatening way as they continue to develop literacy skills.
- Guided reading allows teachers to support students at their own instructional level. Teachers assess and diagnose the strengths and needs of each student then provide immediate individualized instruction and reinforcement.
- Independent reading lets students develop reading fluency through repeatedly reading texts at the appropriate level. Students are challenged not only to read expressively but also to increase reading rates and comprehension.
- Literature circles allow groups of students to independently read a common book and then hold discussions with peers. This strategy increases comprehension, reflection, and critical thinking skills.
- Interactive reading and writing enables even the youngest student to strengthen growing literacy skills while engaged in an authentic classroom literacy task such as writing and then reading "thank you" letters or experiences stories while being supported by the teacher.
- Benchmark testing at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year allows another means of monitoring student progress and achievement. This enables teachers to target instruction on specific skills at appropriate levels for each student.

- Print-rich environments encourage natural acquisition of the elements of reading and writing for even the youngest Pillow student. This is especially important because 16 different languages are spoken among our students' families.

V-3. Science curriculum: Pillow's school mission to promote lifelong learning is fostered and encouraged through the science curriculum which begins at the Pre-K level and is part of the core curriculum at all grade levels up to fifth grade. Evidence of this mission is seen every day as students work in collaborative groups, using the tools of science to explore and actively find answers to scientific inquiries that are both student and teacher generated. Classroom instruction at Pillow encourages the natural tendency of children to ask "Why?" and "What if..." through hands-on, multi-sensory, in-depth investigations that provide students with experiences correlated to their cognitive development.

As their science knowledge progresses through the grade levels, their science acquisition of specific processing skills evolves from direct experiences in which they observe, sort, and organize ideas to the construction of more advanced concepts by classifying, testing, and determining cause and effect relationships. All students are expected to develop a thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills outlined in our district's instructional planning guide, but what makes Pillow students excel are the multi-sensory and interdisciplinary approaches to this goal. Our science curriculum emphasizes real life situations that allow students to internalize the knowledge and skills specific to each grade level. Fifth graders participate in a weeklong outdoor environmental education program focused on local watershed protection. Students in grades kindergarten through fifth participate in a University-based science outreach program where college students majoring in science share their expertise with our students. Each spring, students at all grade levels participate in the local Science Fair. Science is something students *do* at Pillow - not simply what teachers teach.

V-4. Improving student learning: Building upon successes and focusing on individual student needs is Pillow's pathway to improved student learning. Data derived from statewide assessments, periodic benchmark testing, and daily classroom work offer insights into student progress and achievement. Once student challenges are identified, teachers choose appropriate instructional methods by drawing upon past teaching experiences, holding discussions with colleagues, and personally researching avenues to effectively reach, motivate, and teach a child.

Various teaming arrangements offer powerful advantages for supporting efforts to improve student learning. Team teaching is an example. This method allows Pillow teachers the opportunity to use special interests and expertise in order to enhance subject matter presentations. Grade level teaming provides colleagues with an opportunity to share ideas such as hands-on activities and cooperative learning strategies along with developmentally appropriate materials and resources. As a result, instruction is more on target for a particular age group. Vertical teaming enables teachers to combine knowledge and understanding of individual students' strengths and needs. In-depth understanding can lead to the development of long range goals, effective methods, and team support for a struggling student.

Pillow teachers have become experts in finding ways to develop a sense of respect and trust that is an essential ingredient before students feel safe enough to take that leap of faith that often accompanies the risk of learning something new. Pillow teachers strive to create a classroom environment that offers security and warmth where students grow and flourish. Our Committee of Respect makes periodic presentations to the faculty. These sessions serve as reminders that we each are models of respect for one another and ourselves. Our Pillow staff is constantly searching for methods to advance our students' growth and learning.

V-5. Impact of professional development: Pillow teachers strive to do their very best for their students. Because of this passion, teachers search for workshops, in-service meetings and conferences which offer opportunities to develop their instructional skills and increase content knowledge base. The resulting growth has a direct benefit for Pillow students. If student assessment data, for example, indicates that our students are lacking mathematical understandings, then teachers will seek out opportunities to enhance this area of their practice. Recently, Pillow teachers spent up to two weeks in training while learning new teaching methods offered in district workshops such as one entitled "Math Investigations". Many of our staff has extensive training in teaching special populations within our student body such as the "Gifted and Talented" students, those for whom English is a second language, students with special behavioral or physical needs, and bilingual children.

In order to have a common frame of reference when trying to help students achieve, Pillow teachers participate in book studies. Teachers receive copies of a book, read it, and then spend time discussing the book's meaning for their students' learning. For example, the book study of Motivating Students Who Don't Care offered an insightful look into various approaches for working with disengaged students.

After Pillow teachers receive new training or knowledge at a workshop or conference, they often return and present their learning to colleagues during special faculty meetings. Teachers teaching teachers is a most effective tool for staff development. At a recent faculty in-service, each grade level made presentations on ways to increase challenges for our students through the use of academically rigorous learning centers and lessons. Such presentations and discussions raise the bar for staff and students alike. It seems to be true - when teachers learn, their students inevitably learn, too.

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Grade: 3-5

Test: TAAS (Texas Assessment of Academic Skills), 1999 – 2002; TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills), 2003

Publisher: Texas Education Agency

Number of students in the grade in which the test was administered: *See Table*

Number of students who took the test: *See Table*

What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed? Figures in the attached table reflect participation in either TAAS or TAKS, the state assessments designed for the general population of students. Special education students who took the State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA) are “excluded” from these numbers, although they were, in fact, part of the state assessment system. In addition, recent immigrants are excluded from the general assessments, although they would have participated in the overall state assessment system through the Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE).

Number excluded: *See Table* Percent excluded: *See Table*

Test Standards: Two standards are reported for the state assessments included in this table. For TAAS, students could *Meet minimum expectations* and receive *Academic Recognition*. For TAKS, students are reported to have *Met the standard* and, in addition, could achieve *Commended Performance*.

Met the standard/Met minimum expectations – This category represents satisfactory academic achievement. Students in this category performed at a level that was at or above the state passing standard. Students in this category can be assumed to have a sufficient understanding of the knowledge and skills measured at this grade.

Commended performance/Academic recognition – This category represents high academic achievement. Students in this category performed at a level that was considerably above the state passing standard. Further, students in this category can be assumed to have a thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills measured at this grade.

3rd Grade Reading Results (English and Spanish)

	2002-2003 ¹	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000 ²	1998-1999 ²
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
School Scores					
% Met Minimum Standards		79	82	88	79
% Received Academic Recognition		23	16	14	14 ⁴
% Met Standards	96				
% Commended Performance	29				
Number of students tested	41	57	44	57	56
Percent of total students tested	79	95	94	74	76
Number of students excluded	11	3	3	20	18
Percent of students excluded	21	5	6	26	24
Subgroup Scores					
1. White					
% Met Minimum Standards		91	85	86	84
% Received Academic Recognition		30	25	17	12
% Met Standards	94				
% Commended Performance	47				
Number of students tested	17	23	20	29	25
2. Hispanic					
% Met Minimum Standards		84	82	95	61
% Received Academic Recognition		20	9	10	0 ⁴
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	16				
Number of students tested	12	22	11	21	18
3. African American					
% Met Minimum Standards		44	70	67	89
% Received Academic Recognition		0	10	16	22
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	13				
Number of students tested	8	9	10	6	9
4. Economically Disadvantaged					
% Met Minimum Standards		70	75	83	78 ⁴
% Received Academic Recognition		9	15	6	6 ⁴
% Met Standards	95				
% Commended Performance	5				
Number of students tested	21	33	20	18	18 ⁴
State Scores ³					
% Met Minimum Standards		87	86	87	88
% Received Academic Recognition		NA	NA	NA	NA
% Met Standards	89				
% Commended Performance	26				

¹ This is the first administration of the TAKS exam.

² No SDAA exams were available these years.

³ The State Scores only include students tested in English.

⁴ Only students tested in English were included in these data fields.

Source: Electronic data file from the state contractor.

3rd Grade Mathematics Results (English and Spanish)

	2002-2003 ¹	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000 ²	1998-1999 ^{2,4}
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
School Scores					
% Met Minimum Standards		95	74	70	75
% Received Academic Recognition		16	0	11	11
% Met Standards	88				
% Commended Performance	19				
Number of students tested	42	58	43	57	55
Percent of total students tested	98	92	91	74	80
Number of students excluded	0	5	4	20	14
Percent of students excluded	0	8	9	26	20
Subgroup Scores					
1. White					
% Met Minimum Standards		100	79	72	83
% Received Academic Recognition		27	0	14	13
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	29				
Number of students tested	17	22	19	29	24
2. Hispanic					
% Met Minimum Standards		92	80	76	69
% Received Academic Recognition		8	0	10	13
% Met Standards	93				
% Commended Performance	14				
Number of students tested	14	25	10	21	16
3. African American					
% Met Minimum Standards		88	55	33	60
% Received Academic Recognition		0	0	0	0
% Met Standards	57				
% Commended Performance	14				
Number of students tested	7	8	11	6	10
4. Economically Disadvantaged					
% Met Minimum Standards		90	68	67	45
% Received Academic Recognition		6	0	11	0
% Met Standards	73				
% Commended Performance	13				
Number of students tested	15	31	19	18	20
State Scores ³					
% Met Minimum Standards		87	82	80	82
% Received Academic Recognition		NA	NA	NA	NA
% Met Standards	90				
% Commended Performance	18				

¹ This is the first administration of the TAKS exam.

² No SDAA exams were available these years.

³ The State Scores only include students tested in English.

⁴ Only students tested in English were included in the data for this year.

Source: Electronic data file from the state contractor.

4th Grade Reading Results (English and Spanish)

	2002-2003 ¹	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000 ²	1998-1999 ²
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
School Scores					
% Met Minimum Standards		97	95	77	87
% Received Academic Recognition		58	50	18	27
% Met Standards	95				
% Commended Performance	28				
Number of students tested	43	33	44	60	52
Percent of total students tested	96	92	94	82	76
Number of students excluded	2	3	3	13	16
Percent of students excluded	4	8	6	18	24
Subgroup Scores					
1. White					
% Met Minimum Standards		100	95	96	92
% Received Academic Recognition		71	60	16	44
% Met Standards	94				
% Commended Performance	44				
Number of students tested	18	14	20	25	25
2. Hispanic					
% Met Minimum Standards		100	95	61	85
% Received Academic Recognition		86	37	28	8
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	24				
Number of students tested	17	7	19	18	13
3. African American					
% Met Minimum Standards		90	100	58	70
% Received Academic Recognition		20	60	8	0
% Met Standards	83				
% Commended Performance	0				
Number of students tested	6	10	5	12	10
4. Economically Disadvantaged					
% Met Minimum Standards		93	93	63	75
% Received Academic Recognition		40	47	0	6
% Met Standards	95				
% Commended Performance	14				
Number of students tested	22	15	15	19	16
State Scores ³					
% Met Minimum Standards		92	90	89	88
% Received Academic Recognition		NA	NA	NA	NA
% Met Standards	86				
% Commended Performance	17				

¹ This is the first administration of the TAKS exam.

² No SDAA exams were available these years.

³ The State Scores only include students tested in English.

Source: Electronic data file from the state contractor.

4th Grade Mathematics Results (English and Spanish)

	2002-2003 ¹	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000 ²	1998-1999 ²
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
School Scores					
% Met Minimum Standards		94	93	80	85
% Received Academic Recognition		19	7	9	17
% Met Standards	98				
% Commended Performance	33				
Number of students tested	45	32	43	56	54
Percent of total students tested	96	89	91	93	79
Number of students excluded	2	4	4	4	14
Percent of students excluded	4	11	9	7	21
Subgroup Scores					
1. White					
% Met Minimum Standards		92	89	91	88
% Received Academic Recognition		31	0	5	24
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	50				
Number of students tested	18	13	19	22	25
2. Hispanic					
% Met Minimum Standards		100	95	78	83
% Received Academic Recognition		0	11	11	17
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	28				
Number of students tested	18	6	19	18	12
3. African American					
% Met Minimum Standards		90	100	64	80
% Received Academic Recognition		10	20	0	0
% Met Standards	86				
% Commended Performance	14				
Number of students tested	7	10	5	11	10
4. Economically Disadvantaged					
% Met Minimum Standards		93	93	63	81
% Received Academic Recognition		21	7	0	13
% Met Standards	96				
% Commended Performance	21				
Number of students tested	24	14	15	19	16
State Scores ³					
% Met Minimum Standards		94	91	87	87
% Received Academic Recognition		NA	NA	NA	NA
% Met Standards	88				
% Commended Performance	16				

¹ This is the first administration of the TAKS exam.

² No SDAA exams were available these years.

³ The State Scores only include students tested in English.

Source: Electronic data file from the state contractor.

4th Grade Writing Results (English and Spanish)

	2002-2003 ¹	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000 ²	1998-1999 ²
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
School Scores					
% Met Minimum Standards		93	98	84	74
% Received Academic Recognition		57	45	27	23
% Met Standards	95				
% Commended Performance	19				
Number of students tested	43	30	42	56	53
Percent of total students tested	91	83	89	77	78
Number of students excluded	4	6	5	17	15
Percent of students excluded	9	17	11	23	22
Subgroup Scores					
1. White					
% Met Minimum Standards		86	95	91	72
% Received Academic Recognition		50	50	36	24
% Met Standards	89				
% Commended Performance	33				
Number of students tested	18	14	20	22	25
2. Hispanic					
% Met Minimum Standards		100	100	78	71
% Received Academic Recognition		67	41	17	36
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	12				
Number of students tested	17	6	17	18	14
3. African American					
% Met Minimum Standards		100	100	82	70
% Received Academic Recognition		63	40	27	10
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	0				
Number of students tested	6	8	5	11	10
4. Economically Disadvantaged					
% Met Minimum Standards		100	100	85	67
% Received Academic Recognition		55	54	20	22
% Met Standards	95				
% Commended Performance	5				
Number of students tested	22	11	13	20	18
State Scores ³					
% Met Minimum Standards		89	89	90	88
% Received Academic Recognition		NA	NA	NA	NA
% Met Standards	87				
% Commended Performance	14				

¹ This is the first administration of the TAKS exam.

² No SDAA exams were available these years.

³ The State Scores only include students tested in English.

Source: Electronic data file from the state contractor.

5th Grade Reading Results (English and Spanish)

	2002-2003 ¹	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000 ²	1998-1999 ²
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
School Scores					
% Met Minimum Standards		95	81	80	86
% Received Academic Recognition		36	11	22	34
% Met Standards	83				
% Commended Performance	20				
Number of students tested	30	44	54	51	76
Percent of total students tested	94	98	98	85	82
Number of students excluded	2	1	1	9	17
Percent of students excluded	6	2	2	15	18
Subgroup Scores					
1. White					
% Met Minimum Standards		100	100	83	97
% Received Academic Recognition		50	14	29	41
% Met Standards	82				
% Commended Performance	36				
Number of students tested	11	14	21	24	34
2. Hispanic					
% Met Minimum Standards		100	63	73	67
% Received Academic Recognition		33	13	20	24
% Met Standards	86				
% Commended Performance	0				
Number of students tested	7	21	16	15	21
3. African American					
% Met Minimum Standards		78	75	86	75
% Received Academic Recognition		22	0	14	25
% Met Standards	80				
% Commended Performance	20				
Number of students tested	10	9	12	7	12
4. Economically Disadvantaged					
% Met Minimum Standards		89	64	63	67
% Received Academic Recognition		26	14	6	8
% Met Standards	73				
% Commended Performance	20				
Number of students tested	15	19	14	16	24
State Scores ³					
% Met Minimum Standards		92	90	87	86
% Received Academic Recognition		NA	NA	NA	NA
% Met Standards	80				
% Commended Performance	17				

¹ This is the first administration of the TAKS exam.

² No SDAA exams were available these years.

³ The State Scores only include students tested in English.

Source: Electronic data file from the state contractor.

5th Grade Math Results (English and Spanish)

	2002-2003 ¹	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000 ²	1998-1999 ²
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
School Scores					
% Met Minimum Standards		95	76	80	88
% Received Academic Recognition		21	4	14	20
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	20				
Number of students tested	30	43	54	51	76
Percent of total students tested	94	96	98	85	82
Number of students excluded	2	2	1	9	17
Percent of students excluded	6	4	2	15	18
Subgroup Scores					
1. White					
% Met Minimum Standards		100	86	75	94
% Received Academic Recognition		29	5	13	24
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	45				
Number of students tested	11	14	21	24	33
2. Hispanic					
% Met Minimum Standards		100	75	80	81
% Received Academic Recognition		25	0	27	0
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	0				
Number of students tested	7	21	16	15	21
3. African American					
% Met Minimum Standards		75	50	86	75
% Received Academic Recognition		25	0	0	17
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	10				
Number of students tested	10	8	12	7	12
4. Economically Disadvantaged					
% Met Minimum Standards		89	71	69	68
% Received Academic Recognition		16	0	13	4
% Met Standards	100				
% Commended Performance	13				
Number of students tested	15	19	14	16	25
State Scores ³					
% Met Minimum Standards		96	94	92	90
% Received Academic Recognition		NA	NA	NA	NA
% Met Standards	86				
% Commended Performance	17				

¹ This is the first administration of the TAKS exam.

² No SDAA exams were available these years.

³ The State Scores only include students tested in English.

Source: Electronic data file from the state contractor.